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1387 '99 JUL 30 P3:28

Dockets Management Branch
Food and Drug Administration
Department of Health and Human Services
12420 Parklawn Dr., Room 1-23
Rockville, MD 20857

Re: 98P-0203/CP

Dear Management,

We were appalled to read that you endorse this cruel practice known as forced molting!

"Forced molting is the cruel practice of withholding food for up to 2 weeks from egg laying hens. As a result of this stress and trauma, hundreds of thousands of birds die a torturous death by starvation. Those who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers, and lose up to 35 percent of their body weight. The purpose of this practice is to shorten their natural molting cycle so that one more batch of eggs will be produced before the "spent" hens are slaughtered.

Research has shown that forced molting significantly increases the frequency and severity of salmonella enteritidis among hens. USDA immunologist Peter Holt concludes that forced molting "increased the severity of a concurrent intestinal salmonella enteritidis infection" (Poultry Science 71:1842-1848; 1992). The result is a sick bird and a contaminated egg. The only benefit from forced molting is seen in the egg producer's pocketbook.

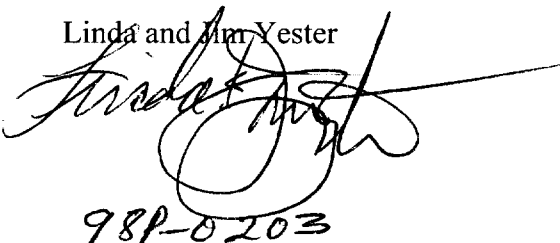
Forced molting is so cruel that in 1987 it was banned in Great Britain and most European countries limit the length of food deprivation to a single day during a forced molt. The hideous conditions that force-molted hens endure warrant the elimination of this practice in the United States as well.

What you can do:

Please eliminate the practice of force molting layer hens. We also are supporting a petition filed by United Poultry Concerns and the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights. Please help us be more human, and stop this today.


Sincerely,

Linda and Jim Yester



98P-0203

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